

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
19 August 2021

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Bob Davidson, Deneen Shockley, Mike Velasco, Jan Stamps, Alana Williams, Jeff Reeves, Cliff Bourke

Commissioners Absent:

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Christie Vondrak, Katie Eaton, Lochlan Wooten, Jessica Johnson

Call to Order

Chairman Davidson called the meeting to order.

Chairman Davidson issued the oath of the office to newly appointed Commissioners Jeff Reeves (Lexington County) and Cliff Bourke (Richland County). The Commission welcome Reeves and Bourke and look forward to serving with them on the Riverbanks Park Commission.

Reading of the Minutes

The July 15, 2021 commission minutes were approved as distributed.

Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Davidson remarked that he is pleased to see that the financials are very strong again this month, and that he is proud of the hard work staff have put into preparing for this month's AZA Accreditation Inspection.

VP of Finance Report

VP of Finance Jessica Johnson provided the following report:

- Riverbanks is in a strong financial position right now. Ended the year with net income of \$4.8M which is incredibly strong. That net income was assigned out to capital projects and rebuilding the operating cushion designation.
- July financials show a fund balance of \$7.8M.
- Statement of revenues and expenses- Earned revenue is over budget. Governmental support is a little under due to the timing of receiving Richland County funds. Departmental expenditures are under budget by \$171,000 but are over this time last year as we start to return to closer to normal operations.
- Audit update- The auditing firm (Scott & Company) is in their third year of a 3-year contract. They were on site in July for preliminary fieldwork and they were back this week for the audit. They will wrap up their report are scheduled to come to the November Commission meeting for presentation and approval.
 - Velasco motioned to approve the July financials; Reeves second m/c unanimous

President & Chief Executive Officer's Report

President and CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- We are continuing to monitor opportunities to apply for grants for businesses affected by COVID19. We will be applying for the second round of SVOG (Shuttered Venue Operating Grant).
- Society Board Candidates- if you have any connections with anyone who would be interested in serving on the Society Board, they are taking applications now. Please let Katie or Tommy know and we can assist with getting nominations to Monique for review.
- Open Carry Law- Riverbanks is part of a parks system that allows concealed weapons to enter the park. New legislation was passed this weekend that now allows open carry of firearms in the park.
- Joe Wilson and his staff visited Riverbanks yesterday as a part of his annual bus tour. He had a great visit and is interested in joining the caucus for Zoos. We will send him follow up information.

Chief Administrative Officer's Report:

CAO Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- We have reinvented the ways that we recognize and engage with staff throughout the year. We had our first staff event of the new fiscal year last week and treated them to smoothies on a hot day. It was a successful event and we are looking forward to more throughout the year.
- Staffing updates- our teams continue to work to find creative ways to recruit and keep staff. We have been attending job fairs as much as possible and are seeing a global lack of participation and interest from the community.
- National Zoo Keeper week was in July. AAZK sponsors the week and we contributed with lunch bags filled of treats and a catered pizza lunch for our zoo keepers and animal care teams.
- We have been tracking staff covid cases since the pandemic began. Since the onset of the pandemic, the month we saw the highest number of positive covid cases in staff was November 2020. We are currently tied with that highest number. So far, all positives since the availability of vaccine have been in unvaccinated staff, but we are continuing to monitor and mitigate risk as much as possible.
- To prepare for AZA Accreditation Inspection, John Davis hosted a presentation that was available to staff both in person and virtually. His presentation was great in preparing our staff as to what they should expect during accreditation inspection week.

Chief Operating Officer's Report:

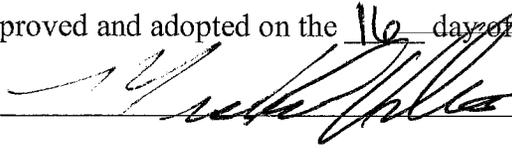
COO Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Animal Update- Sundance the bear continues to receive close monitoring for a foot issue. The veterinary team and his care team have done a wonderful job in caring for him and he seems to be improving.
- Wooten has been taking a deep look into animal training at Riverbanks and the behaviors that are trained to allow our teams to better care for our animals.

- Aquarium update- Interviews for the ARC renovation contractor have been completed. Boyer Construction received the award for contracting. The Boyd Foundation will be sponsoring the full amount of construction for renovation. The aquarium closed to the public on Monday of this week, and construction will begin in September.
 - Velasco motioned to give Stringfellow the approval to sign the AIA contract and utilize the funds for the ARC renovation project. Reeves seconded, m/c unanimous
- Waterfall Junction splash play operation will officially close to the public on September 6.
- Wooten shared an AZA Accreditation Inspection presentation with the commissioners.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 16 day of September 2021.


_____, Secretary